

MEDIA
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TARRAWARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART

Thursday February 10, 2022

David Noonan:
Only when it's cloudless
TarraWarra Museum of Art
24 March – 10 July 2022

Curated by Dr Victoria Lynn, Director, TarraWarra Museum of Art



David Noonan, *Mnemosyne* 2021
film still, 16mm film, courtesy the artist, Modern Art, London

One of Australia's most successful contemporary artists, David Noonan, will feature in a major exhibition at TarraWarra Museum of Art. Born in Ballarat, and based in London, Noonan has exhibited in museums and galleries in the USA, Europe, and Australia. His work is renowned for its imaginative incorporation and recombination of found imagery: haunting, uncanny, and enigmatic.

Featuring predominantly new works, the exhibition includes a major new sculptural installation consisting of eleven 215cm high panels; the artist's first 16mm film since the 1990s with a score by the acclaimed Australian musician Warren Ellis; two major new tapestries; and several new collages on linen. The exhibition also includes significant loans dating back to 2003 from the Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of Ballarat, and private collections.

Curated by TarraWarra Director, Victoria Lynn, in close collaboration with the artist, the exhibition is conceived as a single installation.

As a collagist, Noonan works with found images—ranging across dance, theatre, sub-cultures, abstract art and everyday scenes—holding them in refined tension. This is an art of juxtaposition, where one world can rub up against another, triggering memories and feelings within the viewer.

Noonan works in black and white, and the shades of grey in between. The reduced palette furthers the enigmatic nature of his work. It also emphasises the archival quality of the images. As he comments, ‘The purely greyscale palette is a distilled aesthetic that serves to create a tonal continuity between the works.’

Only when it's cloudless (the title of the major installation in the exhibition) is adapted from Yoshida Kenkō, *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō*. The 14th century Japanese Buddhist monk offers the observation that we should be more mindful of our present moment, and not look at the moon ‘only when it is cloudless’. He stresses the impermanence of life, creating a book of fleeting moments and memories. In Noonan’s work, figures dressed in white perform on a shallow stage with an image of the moon. Rendered in soft, almost blurred imagery these figures cast contrasting dynamic, deep and sharp shadows.

Noonan’s recently completed film, *Mnemosyne*, shot on 16mm, is presented in a sculptural form across a bank of six large screens. The title of the film is inspired by the Greek goddess of memory, Mnemosyne, who had the power to grant the dead access to memories. We experience a series of still images across which the camera pans from left to right. The images include kites, children, gatherings and street parades. The additional element in this film are the clouds of acidic yellow and black dye which float across the images. The introduction of colour into Noonan’s overall greyscale palette, which has informed and characterised his practice since 2015, adds an ethereal quality to this film, which is further enhanced by the evocative score by Warren Ellis whose soundtrack is haunted with a sense of both tense expectation and passages of sombre tones.

Two new *Untitled* Jacquard tapestries, created in collaboration with weavers in Flanders, Belgium, and Magnolia Editions in Oakland, California, draw on a series of images the artist began to work with in 2019 depicting a performer being dressed for the stage. While the attending seamstress holds scissors in her hand, the background references black abstract brushwork. Curator, TarraWarra Director Victoria Lynn, says:

“The figures often appear to be caught ‘off guard’, accidentally captured during moments of quiet and intimate introspection. They possess an uncanny quality that sits somewhere between being themselves and being ‘on display’. Caught in this transformation from one state to another, they appear to be ‘outside’ conventional behavioural patterns. Archival images hover and drift in a liminal space.

Tinged with melancholy, Noonan's works engender a sense of longing for fleeting moments that have since disappeared. But at the same time, the collection of imagery takes us to other places and possible futures. Time is cut up, and we are dislocated by these images."

Hamish Balnaves, Chief Executive Officer and Trustee of The Balnaves Foundation, said,

"This year marks the seventh year that The Balnaves Foundation has supported TarraWarra Museum of Art to deliver major exhibitions by Australian artists. The Foundation is proud to partner in these important endeavours, providing vital opportunities for Australian artists to be showcased, whilst providing a broad range of audiences access to outstanding arts experiences."

TarraWarra Museum of Art will be the only venue for this exhibition.

ENDS

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Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm and open all public holidays.

Admission: \$10 Adults; \$8 Seniors; \$5 Concession and Students; Museum Members and children under 12 free.

Biography David Noonan

David Noonan was born in Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, in 1969. He lives and works in London. David Noonan's work has recently been the subject of solo exhibitions at such institutions as Art Gallery of Ballarat, VIC, Australia (2020); Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle, WA, Australia (2019); Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, VIC, Australia (2018); the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, USA (2015); Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO, USA (2011); Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia (2009); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2008); and Palais De Tokyo, Paris, France (2007).

Noonan's work has been included in the recent group exhibitions including *Monster Theatres: 2020 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia (2020); *Simon Denny: Mine*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Australia, (2019); *Drawing Biennial 2019*, Drawing Room, London (2019); *Images en lutte. La culture visuelle de l'extreme gauche en France (1968-1974)*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France (2018); *The Trick Brain*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Aishti Foundation, Antelias, Lebanon (2017); *Call of the Avant-Garde: Constructivism and Australian Art*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, VIC, Australia (2017); *Return to Mulholland Drive*, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, La Panacée, Centre for Contemporary Culture, Montpellier, France (2017).

Noonan's work is held in public and private collections including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Mamco-Modern and Contemporary

Art Museum, Geneva; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and Art Gallery of Ballarat.



David Noonan, *Untitled* 2015, silkscreen on linen collage, 222.5 x 122.5 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection, Purchased 2015, Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

NOTES

1. [TarraWarra Museum of Art](#) is a leading Australian museum with a charter to display Australian art from the second half of the twentieth century to the present day. Since opening in 2003, the Museum has become recognised as a cultural jewel of the Yarra Valley, providing visitors with an enjoyable and inspiring experience which combines stunning architecture with the very best of modern and contemporary art. Over 100 exhibitions have been presented at the Museum to date, covering a diverse range of stimulating and innovative Australian and international art in group and collection shows and single artist surveys, providing the opportunity to experience fresh contexts in which to view Australian art.
2. The [Balnaves Foundation](#) supports eligible organisations across Australia that aim to create a better Australia through education, medicine and the arts with a focus on young people, the disadvantaged and Indigenous Australia.

3. Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @d.j.noonan @TarraWarraMA #davidnoonan #artplaceideas

David Noonan: *Only when it's cloudless* has been generously supported by

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